

STATE WATER POLICY AMENDMENTS

2022 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

LONG TITLE**General Description:**

This bill amends the state water policy.

Highlighted Provisions:

This bill:

- ▶ includes recharge of aquifers as part of the state water policy; and
- ▶ makes technical changes.

Money Appropriated in this Bill:

None

Other Special Clauses:

None

Utah Code Sections Affected:

AMENDS:

73-1-21, as enacted by Laws of Utah 2020, Chapter 160

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:

Section 1. Section **73-1-21** is amended to read:

73-1-21. State water policy.

(1) It is the policy of the state that:

(a) Utah shall pursue adequate, reliable, affordable, sustainable, and clean water resources, recognizing that Utah is one of the most arid states in the nation and as such, there is, and will continue to be, a need to ensure Utah's finite water resources are used beneficially;

(b) Utah will promote:

(i) water conservation, efficiency, and the optimal use of water resources, while identifying intended and unintended consequences to ensure appropriate choice and implementation of particular strategies;

(ii) water resource development and the creation of new water infrastructure necessary to meet the state's growing demand and promote economic development;

- (iii) compliance with state statutes regarding Lake Powell pipeline development and Bear River development;
- (iv) the timely replacement of aging or inefficient water resource, drinking water, wastewater, and storm water infrastructure;
- (v) the optimal use of agricultural water to sustain and improve food production and the productive capacity of agricultural lands;
- (vi) water quality in rivers and lakes that:
- (A) complies with state clean water and safe drinking water statutes; and
- (B) protects public health;
- (vii) water pricing and funding mechanisms that:
- (A) provide revenue stability while encouraging conservation, efficiency, and optimization efforts;
- (B) adequately cover infrastructure needs; and
- (C) balance social, economic, public interest, and environmental values;
- (viii) respect for water rights;
- (ix) standards for accurate water use measurement, tracking, enforcement, and reporting;
- (x) efforts to educate and engage the public in:
- (A) individual actions that protect water quality, including preventing and mitigating water pollution; and
- (B) conservation practices and the efficient and optimal use of water resources;
- (xi) the implementation of cyber security and physical security measures for water infrastructure;
- (xii) the study and consideration of mechanisms for increased flexibility in water use such as water banking and split season uses;
- (xiii) continued improvements in the management of water resources through protection, restoration, and science-based evaluation of Utah watersheds, ~~and~~ increased reservoir capacity, and aquifer recharge or aquifer storage and recovery;
- (xiv) the development and beneficial use of Utah's allocated share of interstate rivers, including Utah's allocations under the 1922 and 1948 Colorado River Compacts and the 1980 Amended Bear River Compact;

(xv) the study and development of strategies and practices necessary to address declining water levels and protect the water quality and quantity of the Great Salt Lake, Utah Lake, and Bear Lake, taking into consideration natural climate change, natural weather systems and patterns, and normal cyclic water level change over time, while balancing economic, social, and environmental needs;

(xvi) regulations and practices, including voluntary practices, that maintain sufficient stream flows and lake levels to provide reasonable access to recreational activities and protect and restore water quality, quantity, and healthy ecosystems, including protecting groundwater and surface water sources from pollution;

(xvii) equitable access to safe, affordable, and reliable drinking water to protect public health;

(xviii) regulations and practices that encourage effective treatment of wastewater to maximize its availability for beneficial use and minimize depletion and the further degradation of other waters;

(xix) the control of invasive species that threaten or degrade waters of the state;

(xx) coordination among the state, water providers, water users, local governments, government agencies, and researchers in the study of ways weather and climate will impact future water supplies, demand, and quality;

(xxi) water laws, rules, and enforcement that are consistent with this Subsection (1) and encourage transparency, order, and certainty in the use of public water;

(xxii) the support and funding of research, science, and technology necessary to achieve the provisions of this Subsection (1); and

(xxiii) the collaboration, cooperation, and engagement of stakeholders in the identification and advancement of actions that support the provisions of this Subsection (1); and

(c) Utah supports the timely and appropriate negotiated settlement of federally reserved water right claims for both Native American trust lands and other existing federal reservations, and opposes any future designation of public lands that does not quantify any associated federally reserved water rights.

(2) State agencies are encouraged to conduct agency activities consistent with Subsection (1) and implement policies established by the Legislature that promote the near-

95 and long-term stewardship of water quality and water resources.

96 (3) This section does not create a cause of action against the state's or a state agency's

97 action that is inconsistent with Subsection (1) and does not waive governmental immunity

98 under Title 63G, Chapter 7, Governmental Immunity Act of Utah.

99 (4) The Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environment Interim Committee shall

100 review the state water policy annually and recommend priority balancing and any other changes

101 to the Legislature.